



NW\_Sage\_Grouse, BLM\_CO &lt;blm\_co\_nw\_sage\_grouse@blm.gov&gt;

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## BLM - Greater Sage Grouse EIS

2 messages

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**Nic Korte** <audubongv@gmail.com>  
To: blm\_co\_nw\_sage\_grouse@blm.gov

Fri, Nov 22, 2013 at 8:49 AM

BLM

I am president of Grand Valley Audubon Society. This letter is written on behalf of the approximately 500 local members.

I am writing to encourage the greatest possible protection for ensuring the future for sage grouse and other species relying on the same habitat.

I have an elderly friend who grew up in NW Colorado. She tells of having to chase the "sage chickens" to keep them from eating her family's poultry food. "There were so many, they darkened the sky," she said. That anecdote describes how much of our heritage has already been lost. Now, for most people, reservations are needed to go to a viewing area. This anecdote shows how steep has been the decline. At this rate, will the birds even last a generation?

There is a great deal of sustainable economic benefit for preserving these species. Our chapter regularly sets up field trips to NW Colorado to see Greater Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed grouse. Members have volunteered in surveys of Gunnison Sage Grouse and visited the Waunita Lek. Consequently, we have seen the recent effects of drought on reproduction.

We also know that the genetic diversity in these species makes them somewhat less resilient to changes in habitat. Half-measures will not do it.

Grand Valley Audubon Society's 500 members affirm our support for the following points:

1. BLM should not rely on "no surface occupancy stipulations" (NSO) as these can be waived. BLM should withdraw minerals from future leasing in the highest quality habitat.
2. For areas with the most important habitat (such as area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) proposal in Alt C) BLM should include options to amend, cancel or buy-back leases.
3. For NSO stipulations to be applied, waivers, modifications and exemptions must be limited and applied on a scale larger than just a single zone of management.
4. For disturbance caps, BLM should include analysis of behavioral disturbances in addition to the physical removal of habitat.
5. BLM should utilize special management designations such as ACEC's as a manner to highlight the most important habitat for conservation.

6. There is substantial overlap with Lands with Wilderness Character (LWC) units and Preliminary Priority Habitat throughout the Little Snake and White River BLM Office. Managing to protect wilderness character also protects critical grouse habitat and vice versa.

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Fri, Nov 22, 2013 at 9:00 AM

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